

THE APOSTLES' CREED:
FOSTERING A TRUSTING FAITH
THROUGH
CONFIRMATION CURRICULUM

A professional project presented to the faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Ministry.

by

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This professional project, completed by

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ABSTRACT

The Apostle's Creed: Fostering a Trusting Faith
Through Confirmation Curriculum, by Danny Leon Hill

The goal of this study is to develop a confirmation curriculum that emphasizes faith as a personal trusting relationship in Jesus Christ. The educational theory of the curriculum is based on learning and developmental studies done by Erik Erickson, Lawrence Kohlberg, James Fowler and John Westerhoff. These studies also inform the experiential and relational teaching and learning methods of this curriculum. This study will serve as a junior high confirmation curriculum for churches of the American Lutheran Church and Lutheran Church in America.

Confirmation curriculum has reflected the Lutheran Churches' emphasis on teaching doctrines and the proper theology. This has led to an unbalanced focus on faith as intellectual assent. Past Lutheran confirmation curriculum has also assumed the youth have a Christian background and are baptized. These assumptions are reflected in the lack of curriculum that addresses evangelism and faith development.

This study looks at a theological rationale for founding a curriculum on faith as trust, supported by Scripture, Martin Luther, Martin Buber and H. Richard Niebuhr.

The curriculum covers the Apostles' Creed in five sessions: "Getting Acquainted," "Who Is God?", "What Is a Christian?", "Images of Jesus Christ" and "Who Is the Holy Spirit?" This course is placed within a two year confirmation program which includes a weekly rotating of activities, in addition to class time. The activities include: recreation, short field trips, small group work and dinner together.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

I. PROBLEM

This professional project deals with the problem of neglect of personal faith development in Lutheran confirmation curriculum.

II. BACKGROUND AND IMPORTANCE

When using the term Lutheran Church I will be referring to the two of the three Lutheran denominations that are planning to join together in 1988, the American Lutheran Church (ALC), and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). I have reviewed and used confirmation curriculum published by these two church denominations.

Lutheran junior high confirmation curriculum assumes that the students already have an established relationship with Jesus Christ. A teacher's guide of confirmation curriculum states that, "Confirmation teaching will be built on previous learning in home and church."¹

The Lutheran Church's narrow definition of confirmation hinders a wider ministry.

Confirmation is a pastoral and educational ministry of the church which helps the baptized child through Word and Sacrament to identify more deeply with the Christian community and participate more fully in its mission.²

Confirmation is only addressed to baptized children. If confirmation were more broadly defined to include faith development whether or not the person is baptized it would have a profound effect towards strengthening personal conversion and evangelism in the Lutheran Church. With the current definition where do the unbaptized fit in? What about youth and adults who are unchurched?

A definition of confirmation should be defined to include all people not simply the "baptized child". It should focus on faith, public confession of that faith and church membership. Confirmation itself is a ritual that helps one to grow and develop in the faith. Thus, it is proper for confirmation to include faith development. Wouldn't the Lutheran Church benefit by widening its definition of confirmation?

Confirmation curriculum has followed the Lutheran theological emphasis on baptism. This emphasis translates into a curriculum which requires that youth remember their baptism in response to a wide range of life problems and issues. I would like to see the curriculum emphasize the relationship of trust in Jesus Christ. Faith as a trusting relationship is more relevant to youth than an event that may or may not have happened when they were infants.

Keeping true to the Lutheran position that one receives Christ at infant baptism, the writers of curriculum dare not assume otherwise. The focus, therefore, church

doctrines and creeds, rather than on developing and nurturing a faith based on a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Great importance and tradition is placed on confirmation in the Lutheran Church.

Contrary to the Lutheran belief in the completeness of God's grace in Baptism, the rite of confirmation has been elevated to the place where, contrary to the best theology, it appears to be more important than both of the sacraments...Confirmation has built up such a loyal following among Lutherans during the past four centuries that its importance seems almost uncontestable...It would appear that "as confirmation goes, so goes the church."³

With the declining membership of the Lutheran Church, and a retention of less than 20% of its youth, we could infer from the above citation that confirmation is going in the wrong direction. Focusing on personal faith development would be a step towards the right direction.

A youth may never attend Sunday School or worship, but oftentimes attends confirmation classes, because of the influence of parents, grandparents, or peers. The sensitive pastor would set up times to meet personally with that type of youth and discuss the basics of Christian faith. But what usually happens is that the youth is thrust into the confusing world of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are the beginning of Luther's Small Catechism, which is followed by almost all confirmation curriculum.

The curriculum then proceeds to explain other church doctrines and creeds, which were given to an existing

community of faith. Is not the Lutheran Church assuming the youth already have faith? I believe so, and a review of Lutheran confirmation curriculum points this out also. This is a very important mistake.

Youth would benefit from connecting church doctrines with a trusting personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Youth are more likely to follow a person they have a relationship with than a person they don't know. A classic example is the substitute teacher. Youth will most often try to be more disruptive with a substitute than the regular teacher, because there's no ongoing relationship with the substitute. Youth with an established personal relationship with God are more prone to follow and see the relevance of God's direction in their lives.

Attending confirmation class is often a negative and boring chore which is forced on students by their parents.⁴ Facts and information are given but the living relationship of Jesus Christ and His power are often assumed, and not highlighted. Also, the teacher or pastor is neither trained nor comfortable talking to youth about how to receive Christ or begin a new life of a Christian.

The negative attitude of the confirmation students has a direct connection with the negative attitudes of pastors towards youth work. Studies done by the Search Institute on Lutheran Churches coincides with the 1985 study done by Dr. William Hulme of 1300 American Lutheran Church

pastors.⁵ The studies show that of all the ministries of the church the pastor is the least positive about youth work. Bad attitudes translate into bad learning experiences.

Youth do not hold power in the church. They are not allowed to vote in the congregation often until the age of 18. Youth also do not play a major role in the financial needs of the church. It is sad to admit but reality shows that little power and little money make the youth an easy group to neglect by the busy pastor.

This information encourages me to develop curriculum that is more personal and incorporates dialogue between student and pastor. Pastors who have such a low opinion of youth work are missing out on one of God's greatest blessings.

I was a youth director for four and a half years in a church with over 100 junior high youth. The youth were at many different levels in their faith. There is no confirmation material in the Lutheran Church that begins with basic Christian beliefs and incorporates receiving Jesus Christ and establishing a relationship with Him. It's as if the Lutheran Church assumes no outreach for the unchurched junior high youth, which should be an important part of every church confirmation program.

The frustration of both parents and youth concerning the emphasis of confirmation on doctrines is well summarized by a parent who wrote the following.:

We have raised three children in the Lutheran Church and their knowledge of Jesus is very foggy. Our problem is not American culture, but teaching. We teach doctrine, creeds, articles of religion, etc., but not Jesus or the gospel. Our family was no different than the majority of Lutheran families, until the day we gave up religion and took up Jesus.⁶

A four year study of Lutheran youth showed that junior high youth were "less concerned about indentifying with his congregation and more concerned with exploring more accurately what it means to be a Christian."⁷ The study further revealed that junior high youth felt "strongly about relating to God than learning about Him."⁸ Thus, a picture the study draws shows youth asking help in developing a faith that is personal and relational.

The importance of our youth developing a trusting personal faith in Jesus Christ is critical to the church. Losing the opportunity to share and develop the faith with our youth in confirmation is deadly to the church of today and especially the church of tomorrow.

III. THESIS

The goal of this project is to develop a confirmation curriculum which emphasizes faith as a personal trusting relationship in Jesus Christ.

IV. DEFINITION OF MAJOR TERMS

Confirmation is the completion of the church's program of confirmation ministry, a time of instruction in the Christian faith as found in the Lutheran doctrines. Those who have completed this program become members of the Church through baptism. Confirmation includes a public profession of the faith into which the candidates are baptized. The official definition, as stated earlier in the paper narrowly defines confirmation as persons participating in the church and baptized.

I would like to suggest a new goal for confirmation. Confirmation is the nurturing ministry of the church that fosters and aids in the development and expression of a personal faith in Jesus Christ and its implications for life as a member of the church.

Curriculum is the intentional plan for learning. It is a specific plan to guide people. The goal is to transmit the important truth and wisdom of Christianity, which assists faith development. Primarily, I will use the word to mean printed material, relational and experiential learning.

Confirmation youth for this curriculum are junior high youth in grades eight and nine, ages thirteen through fifteen.

Belief is the maintenance of certain ideas which inform faith. The ideas include doctrines and creeds which constitute an intellectual position.

Faith is the capacity to trust, to be loyal, to take action, to enter into dialogue, to enter into relationship with God as revealed in Jesus Christ and others.

V. WORK PREVIOUSLY DONE IN THE FIELD

Work previously done in the area of confirmation curriculum has been dominated by seminary professors and publishing house curriculum writers. The Lutheran concern for theological purity has emphasized curriculum based more from an adult point of view rather than from youth.

This heavy adult theological intellectualism is continually being force fed to junior high youth in confirmation. This can be seen in all confirmation curriculum published by the ALC or LCA over the last fifteen years. A clear example of this can be seen in the course objectives spelled out in a teacher's guide:

- To show Lutheran doctrine as a theology of grace.
- To explore the historical and biblical roots of the Small Catechism.
- To relate the Small Catechism to the lives of junior high students.
- To provide opportunity for students to develop and express a personal theology.⁹

A seminary student is lucky to accomplish those objectives in four years of study. Because faith is assumed, the objectives do not mention Jesus Christ or the word faith.

VI. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE PROJECT

The proposed confirmation curriculum includes an opportunity and steps to receive Jesus Christ. For students who already have done this, the curriculum will be an important review. For students who are new to the church, or unsure what it means to be a Christian, this will be an excellent time to present faith in Jesus Christ. This can lead to discussions, desires to make a commitment or a request to be baptized.

The curriculum will cover the Apostles' Creed, but the course will be placed within a two year confirmation program which will include various activities that will be mentioned later in the paper. I have reviewed eight confirmation curriculum materials published by the ALC, LCA and Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

VII. PROCEDURE FOR INTEGRATION

I intend to integrate theology and pastoral practice within my project. Theology will inform the concept of faith as trust and relationship. This will be supported by

Scripture and the writings of Martin Luther, Martin Buber, and H. Richard Niebuhr.

Pastoral practice will include two components. First is the educational rationale, which includes learning theory and developmental studies done by Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg, James Fowler and John Westerhoff. Second is the application of theology and education into curriculum for use in a parish setting. I want to incorporate the best methods of teaching and learning and apply them specifically to adolescent faith development. The result will be the use of many disciplines to develop a better way to help youth grow in faith with Jesus Christ.

ENDNOTES

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2 Dorothy Jeffcoat and John Stevens Kerr, Implementing Confirmation Ministry (Philadelphia: Parish Life Press, 1980) 3.

3 W. Kent Gilbert (ed.) Confirmation and Education (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969) 21-23.

4 Ibid., p. 5.

5 John R. Nyberg, "Balanced Life," Lutheran Standard (August 9, 1985) 9.

6 Douglas Selberg, "Letters To The Editor," Lutheran Standard (February 1985).

7 William A. Koppe, How Persons Grow in Christian Community (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973) 144.

8 Ibid., p. 146

9 Clark Morphew (ed.) Today's Catechism, Teacher's Guide (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1980) 5.

Chapter 2

A THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE FOR FOUNDING A CURRICULUM ON FAITH AS TRUST

My interest in writing confirmation curriculum arose over the emphasis by Lutheran confirmation curriculum writers on the intellectual assent aspect of faith. Facts and doctrines are stressed to the point of neglecting the affective, relational, personal or trust components of faith.

The purpose of this chapter is to look theologically at what makes up faith. I will also look at the relational theologies of Martin Buber and H. Richard Niebuhr. The insights of this study will inform the curriculum, which has the goal of aiding the development of a personal and trusting faith for junior high youth.

Curriculum cannot instill faith; but it can enhance experience, tradition and reflection, which can help make one more aware of the gift of faith, the giver, oneself and others. Faith is a gift from God, as Paul states in Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is a gift from God."

Faith consists of three main components.¹ First, faith is composed of belief, a state of mind, mental assent

or conviction. Secondly, faith is trust in an object. Third, faith consists of allegiance or loyalty to a person.

Christian faith similarly is made up of these three components. Faith initiated by God is intellectual assent to statements of belief about God. Faith is a relationship of trust in a personal God who saves us in Jesus Christ. Faith finds expression or action in loyalty to and love of God.

Curriculum must include all three areas if faith is to be addressed in its entirety. A life of faith is one lived out in all areas of life, in response to God's grace. Faith as a gift of God includes the entire person, the mind, emotions and actions.

1. FAITH AS BELIEF: INTELLECTUAL ASSENT

A. Background

Belief is intellectual assent to ideas. But the term *credo*, translated from early creeds as "I believe," literally means "I set my heart."² In earlier centuries the Anglo-Saxon word, "believe," meant "to hold dear," "to prize." It signified to love, to give allegiance, to be loyal.³ This shows that the original meaning of belief or believe was closer to the word faith than today's understanding. English has no verb to go along with the noun, "faith." The verb is translated as "believe." Belief

and faith were not far apart in the early church. 4 Today the phrase "I believe so" is used loosely to mean half opinion and half knowledge. Belief used today has lost a sense of the affective and intellectual meaning it had in earlier times.

Confusion now exists when faith and belief are used as synonyms. "Belief" is a component of faith, but faith is more than belief. Thomas Groome, a professor at Boston College, underscores the importance of the cognitive component of faith which has come to be more associated with belief.

That Christianity makes certain historical, moral, and cognitive claims and proposes them to people as a way of making meaning in their lives is beyond doubt. The activity of Christian faith, therefore, requires, in part, a firm conviction about the truths proposed as essential beliefs of the Christian faith. Insofar as these beliefs are personally appropriated, understood, and accepted by the Christian, there is therefore a cognitive, or what Dulles calls an "intellectualist," dimension to Christian faith.⁵

St. Augustine's definition of faith has strong intellectual undergirdings. To begin with, faith is a divine illumination within a person's soul. The beginning of faith is a gift from God. "This grace 'within' acts upon the person's will and, without violating the freedom of the individual, disposes the will to assent to the truth of what is presented to the intellect."⁶ Thus God's grace comes first, which offers the will the opportunity to assent to

belief. Believing then leads to an intellectual understanding of what is believed.

The intellectual component of faith expounded by Augustine and emphasized by Thomas Aquinas has led to the understanding of equating belief with faith. Belief in turn is seen as intellectual assent. So, to have faith is to intellectually accept the teachings of the church.

Faith begins as a free gift of God but rational thought must be used to make sense of God's grace and revelation for it to have meaning in our life. To understand God's revelation in history and the belief statements of the Christian Church we intellectually consider them and assent with conviction. The Roman Catholic Church has been more associated with the understanding of faith as assent to beliefs. Over the last few years they have responded to criticism to include more affective and creative curriculum.

'Faith' in Catholic theology means mental assent to divinely revealed truth, that is, to 'the faith' of which the Church is the custodian and interpreter. The mind is prepared for such assent by a rational perception of the intrinsic credibility and the sufficient attestation of the articles of faith and is then moved to give its assent to them by an act of the will in voluntary submission to the authority of God.⁷

Faith education in the church is often dominated by the development of the intellect, focusing on the right doctrines. Little attention has been given to the affective part of faith. While this project will use all three areas

of faith which are belief, trust and action, a major emphasis will be on the faith as trust component. John Westerhoff points out that religious education with an emphasis on intellect has unconsciously made religious life more difficult, if not impossible for some people.⁸ Westerhoff calls for a more balanced approach to faith. He states:

Religious faith demands that we learn to sense and respond to the presence of God through means other than reason. Education requires that we help persons regain their God-given ability to wonder and create; to dream, fantasize, imagine, and envision; to sing, paint, dance, and act; their natural capacity for ecstasy, for appreciating the new, the marvelous, the mysterious, and for sensual and kinesthetic awareness; their God-given talent to express themselves emotionally and non-verbally.⁹

Authors Borhek and Curtis state that for belief systems to serve human purposes they must be perceived as true. "Unless beliefs are viewed as true, they become dysfunctional".¹⁰ The beliefs must not only be seen as true but also confirmed and validated. "When it no longer brings clarity to life, its usefulness is over."¹¹

If faith is allowed to be understood solely as belief, then faith becomes an activity of the mind. "When belief is equated with religion or supersedes faith, when it becomes a control mechanism or a test for salvation, it is a prison rather than a home."¹² The affective and

behavioral components of Christian faith are then bypassed. Faith becomes an intellectual exercise which is dead, when not applied personally and in one's daily life experience.

B. Curriculum Applications

What are the facts, information and concepts that are essential for understanding the Christian faith? What information is appropriate for junior high? How can junior high youth confirm or validate beliefs?

With the current usage of the words believe and belief and their meaning of mental activities and reflecting opinion, I offer four options for curriculum: 1) Teach the original meaning of belief. 2) Change the words believe and belief to faith and/or trust. 3) Use new and contemporary words to convey the meaning. 4) Retain belief and believe and teach the difference in usage between believe "in" (trust) versus believe "that" (idea). The curricula in this project which will focus on faith should include all four options.

How can teachers keep faith dynamic and alive for the students? Allow the students to personalize or internalize the concept or ideas of belief. This would give more freedom of expression and thus more answers. Keep from giving "the" answer. Let the youth struggle with the story in creative ways and personalize their connectedness to the story.

How do we know that something or someone is true? Do facts or reason verify truth? Martin Buber states:

It (faith) is a relationship which by its nature does not rest upon 'reasons', just as it does not grow from such; reasons of course can be urged for it, but they are never sufficient to account for my faith.¹³

It would be good to focus on limitations of reason in terms of faith. We don't think our way to salvation.

H.R. Niebuhr points out that ideas are conditioned by the environment and needs of the thinker.

Our definitions of God's nature are conditioned by our need of Him... we apprehend those characteristics of the nature of God best which most adequately answer to the particular needs of life.¹⁴

Junior high thinkers will most effectively assent to ideas and beliefs about God will that are relevant to their life needs. In chapter three I focus on junior high needs through developmental studies. Matching youth's personal needs with appropriate concepts of God should enhance the connection between belief, trust and action.

II. FAITH AS TRUST: DIALOGUE AND RELATIONSHIP

A. Background

Faith comes from the Latin word fidere, which means to trust.¹⁵ While belief focuses on the intellect, the trusting component of faith points to the affective

level of response to God's grace. Because God is faithful we can enter into a relationship of trust. We can trust in a personal God who saves us in Jesus Christ.

The Old and New Testaments teach that it is the heart that trusts and believes:

Psalm 28:7, "The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts; so I am helped, and my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him."

Psalm 112:7, "He is not afraid of evil tidings; his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord."

Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight."

Proverbs 16:20, "He who gives heed to the word will prosper, and happy is he who trusts in the Lord."

Mark 11:22-24, And Jesus answered them, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." Faith and trust are used synonymously in the Gospels.

Luke 24:25, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."

For Paul, the heart is the place where Christ is present, and faith means that His presence is there. Faith

as a trusting relationship with God in Jesus Christ is also expressed by Paul in Romans 4:18-25, Galatians 3:6-9.

The Protestant tradition gives more importance to the trusting element of faith. This definition of faith also stresses the object or core of faith in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

'Faith' in classical Protestant (as in modern biblical) theology means obedient trust or trustful obedience towards God as God is revealed in the Word. It is a response to the divine grace revealed in that Word ... The object of faith is not here a set of doctrinal propositions, but the personal reality of God in Christ; and faith itself is understood essentially in terms of personal relationship.¹⁶

Trust is a matter of the heart. Martin Luther characterizes faith as trust with the words, "motus cordis;" that is, movement of the heart in the presence of God. I believe that Luther's emphasis on the trust element of faith in Jesus Christ was a reaction to the intellectual emphasis of the Scholastics and their doctrine of justification by good works, rather than by faith alone. He spoke of the action of faith, good works, not as a condition or demand but as a natural result of faith. Luther combines the two elements of faith as belief and trust in the statement, "Faith is a living and unshakeable confidence, a belief in the grace of God so assured that a man would die a thousand deaths for its sake."¹⁷

God's acts initiate a faith response that can lead to a personal relationship. Faith as a personal

relationship, as any friendship, would include expression or the trust weakens. Therefore, dialogue is critical to a relationship as Thomas Groome notes:

God's faithfulness to us, leads to trust, awe, wonder, reverence, adoration, gratitude, and petition on our part.

We express these feelings in prayer, both personal and communal. In this sense prayer is the dialogical dimension of our relationship with God in Christ, and without dialogue no relationship can survive. As the liturgical symbols express and celebrate our trusting relationship with God, they also become sources of increased trust, especially as they are celebrated in a supporting community. But our trusting activity must also find expression and be embodied in how we live out our day-to-day existence as "pilgrims in time."¹⁸

Martin Buber describes two styles of interpersonal relationships. One can choose to have an "I-It" or an "I-Thou" relationship with another person. An "I-It" relationship is one in which the other person is treated as an object or a thing. Rules or a rigid moral code may be used by the "I" to control the interaction with the "it."

In the "I-Thou" relationship, the other person is seen as a subject. The first person empathizes with the other person's experience of reality from the other person's subjective stance. This relationship goes so deeply as to create a transcendental dimension in the personhood of the other. The first person encounters and experiences God in the other. Buber states that there is a way of relating to

another person in which one is surprised by the awareness that he or she is not only relating to a temporal human being, but also to that which is eternal, divine and infinite.

There is a mystical quality in the "I-Thou" relationship that is beyond explanation. Every human encounter has the potential for the discerning spiritual person to encounter God. Behind every temporal thou, according to Buber, there waits the Eternal Thou.

The aim of relation is relation's own being, that is, contact with the Thou. For through contact with every Thou we are stirred with a breath of the Thou, that is, of eternal life.¹⁹

Buber underscores the value of the "I-Thou" relationship to the point that for him it defines reality. Either there is dialogue and sharing or there is no reality.

He who takes his stand in relation, shares in a reality, that is, in a being that neither merely belongs to him nor merely lies outside him. All reality is an activity in which I share without being able to appropriate for myself. Where there is no sharing, there is no reality. Where there is self-appropriation there is no reality. The more direct contact with the Thou, the fuller is the sharing.

The I is real in virtue of its sharing in reality. The fuller its sharing the more real it becomes.²⁰

For H. Richard Niebuhr all theology is contextual. He recognizes that the "I-Thou" encounter takes place in the context of relations.

When the Thou is present to me as a knower, it is present as the one that knows not only me but at least one other; and it knows me as knowing not only the Thou but something besides it. This encounter of I and Thou takes place, as it were, always in the presence of a

third, from which I and Thou are distinguished and to which they also respond.²¹

Thus, God is never isolated. Rather, the focus is on "God in relation to self and neighbor, and self and neighbor in relation to God".²² This concept of relational theology is seen also in Mark 12:28-31. Jesus is asked one question but gives two answers. The great commandment to love God cannot be a spiritual mind activity between you and God; rather, it includes neighbor. It is relational.

We are all created in God's image and are thus all God-bearers. Jesus invited us to recognize that He is waiting to be encountered in persons in our everyday experiences when He said, "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40) God's very essence is a shared unity or relationship in the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

B. Curriculum Applications

An assortment of teaching techniques should be used in curriculum that include and encourage affective learning. Specific activities or methods could be: drama, music, role play, story telling, dance, and art.

There is no faith without an object of faith. The nature of the object determines the character of the faith. Thus it is important for the curriculum to emphasize the

character of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as trustworthy.

Why is God or Jesus worthy of such trust? What is unique about Jesus?

Provide opportunities for dialogue and prayer in small groups and individually, between students, teacher, advisors, and God.

Curriculum that aims at educating for faith would put a high priority on assisting each person to discover that they are a Thou relating to another Thou, and in that relationship both are connected to the "Eternal Thou", God. It could include a section on self-image, stressing God's faithfulness and love for us.

Peer groups and cliques could be studied to see how walls are built that keep us from recognizing the thou in others.

III. FAITH AS ACTION: LOYALTY AND EXPRESSION

A. Background

Jesus said, "Follow me," not just think of and trust Me. To follow Jesus, our faith must find expression in our daily lives. If we overemphasize the intellectual and trusting aspect of faith, we may limit our faith to ideas and feelings, and leave out concrete service in this world.

God acted in faithfulness in becoming incarnate in Jesus Christ. God moved beyond symbol and idea to live, die and be resurrected in flesh and blood for us in the life of Jesus.

Faith as assent, and trust as words and feelings are not enough to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Action, or doing, is also required. As Jesus states, "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven (Matthew 7:21). A person's faith will bear good fruits (Matthew 12:33) not just ideas. James 1:22 also reinforces action, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only."

H. Richard Niebuhr saw faith as trust, but at the same time he saw that faith must also include loyalty (action). Faith is "a fundamental personal attitude... apparently universal or general enough to be widely recognized... the attitude and action of confidence in, and fidelity to, certain realities as the sources of value and the objects of loyalty." Faith "involves reference to the value that attaches to the self and to the value toward which the self is directed." Niebuhr holds trust and loyalty in tension when describing faith. "On the one hand it is trust in that which gives value to the self; on the other it is loyalty to what the self values."²³

Faith as trust, for Niebuhr, is reliance upon a source and center of value. On this source or center of value the self "depends not only for his own meaning but for the worth of everything else he encounters."²⁴ His idea of radical monotheism is helpful in widening the concept of God to include all areas of life. In this manner, when one is loyal to God's cause in all life, one is truly living out faith.

Trust, for Niebuhr, is a response elicited by the self's realization that it derives its value from some being which is its source of value. Loyalty is an expression informed by the recognition of the value that is attached to the source itself. Trust is expressed in a confession of faith in the value center, God. Loyalty is expressed faith, as loyalty is the expression or action of commitment and devotion to a cause.

All men live by faith, according to H. Richard Niebuhr. Our daily lives will reveal that we have confidence in and rely upon other people. Religious faith is what we rely on to give life worth and meaning. He states, "... no man lives without living for some purpose, for the glorification of some god, for the advancement of some cause."²⁵ Niebuhr quotes Martin Luther in connecting trust to the object or cause,

Trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and idol... For the two, faith and God, hold close together. Whatever then thy heart clings to ... and relies upon, that is properly thy god.²⁶

H. Richard Niebuhr's most fundamental theological certainty, the sovereignty of God, rests on the trustworthiness of God. Either God is trustworthy or there is no God. Niebuhr states:

The fundamental certainty given to me then was that of God's sovereignty....I came to understand that unless being itself, the constitution of things, the One beyond all the many, the ground of my being and of all being, the ground of its "that-ness" and its "so-ness," was trustworthy--could be counted on by what proceeded from it--I had no God at all....²⁷

Expression, like belief and trust, is an essential component of faith. "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead." (James 2:26) Without expression faith is dead. Faith must not only have expression to be alive, but not keep the other two components, belief and trust in balance. Otherwise, faith could be reduced to our own efforts. However, there will be situations in which context, timing and God's wisdom will guide when one faith component deserves emphasis above the others.

B. Curriculum Application

The leader should intentionally provide experiential opportunities for expression of youths' faith. This could range from field trips, visits to nursing homes,

volunteering for ministry inside and outside the church, letter writing to shut-ins, witnessing, short term mission work locally and more.

The concept of friendship could be used to teach about faith, the trust, loyalty and value that we receive and return through our friends and Jesus Christ.

Expand youth concepts of God, using ideas from H. Richard Niebuhr's idea of radical monotheism. Junior high youth would love a course titled 'Rad' monotheism. This would help them see God involved "even outside the church".

Niebuhr's concept of value could be used to tie in with self-image and responsibility in decision making.

In a larger focus show how life already is grounded in forms of trust. Curriculum can help identify false gods that we rely on to give us meaning and worth. Junior high youth, as well as all ages of people, can be making gods of their schools, popularity, grades, sports, friendships, parents, sex, music, drugs and more. An appropriate place to bring this into the curriculum would be the first commandment, "You shall have no other gods." Luther's explanation in the Small Catechism is "We are to fear, love, and trust God above anything else." In the end our many gods pass away and lead to meaninglessness. Only the one infinite God can fulfill our needs. Niebuhr calls claiming this one God radical monotheism. Its center of value is being itself.

IV. FAITH AS KNOWING

The Hebrew and Greek understanding of the verb "to know", as in "knowing the Lord," in the Old and New Testaments includes and supports the three components of faith mentioned above: belief, trust and action.

Yada is the Hebrew verb for "know." Two verbs in the New Testament, qinoskein and eidenai, are used to translate "to know." Yada is more from the heart than the mind. "To know," for the Hebrews, is not possession of mere intellectual facts, beliefs or information. Rudolf Bultmann stated that the Hebrew usage of yada and qinoskein is much broader than the Greek. The objective is emphasized in Greek, while the Hebrew stresses more the affective or experiential aspects. Yada is intentional engagement in lived experience.²⁸

This knowing is actualized in a trusting and obedient relationship. "God is not acknowledged and thus not known unless God's will is done (action) by the person in response to the experience of God."²⁹ It is a relationship which is initiated by, and includes God, the self and the neighbor.

The Hebrew understanding of knowing God begins with a lived experience that acknowledges in mind and heart God's

sovereignty, and responds by doing God's will. It is in this combination of experience and response that God is known.

The New Testament concept of "to know" is linked with the Hebrew understanding. There are three concepts of "knowing" used in the New Testament. The three areas are knowing as believing, knowing as loving and knowing as obeying. Knowing and believing are interchangeable in the Gospel of John.³⁰ The three ways of knowing connect and support the three components of faith, which are belief (knowledge), trust (loving relationship) and action (obeying).

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Chapter 3

AN EDUCATIONAL RATIONALE FOR FOUNDING A CURRICULUM ON FATIH AS TRUST

Developmental theory is concerned primarily with internal conditions of the participants, while learning and instructional theories are concerned primarily with teaching methods and external environment. Developmental studies and learning theory will be viewed with the idea of an educational application to confirmation training.

I. DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES

Development is the growth process by which persons mature physically, socially, cognitively, morally, emotionally, and in faith understanding. Each human being is unique in their growth and change, but researchers have identified basic characteristics, abilities, needs, concerns and tasks at various stages or levels of development.

With my goal of developing a trusting personal faith in Jesus Christ I will be asking what insights can be gained through developmental studies and theories that can inform curriculum design specifically with junior high youth in mind. This focus can impart valuable educational information with regard to teaching methods, type of material, and the relationship between teacher and students.

Erik Erikson's theory of human ego development holds that at different stages in life we face the task of establishing an equilibrium between ourselves and our social world. There is continuity in development, and each stage is related to the other stages. His theory describes development in terms of the entire life span, divided by specific crises to be resolved. At each crisis, or turning point in life, we either move forward or regress. Thus our lives are the result of the choices we make at each of these conflicts or stages.

Erikson's eight stages of development are:

1. Infancy: Trust versus mistrust.
2. Early childhood: Autonomy versus shame and doubt.
3. The preschool age: Initiative versus guilt.
4. The school age: Industry versus inferiority.
5. Adolescence: Identity versus identity diffusion.
6. Young adulthood: Intimacy versus isolation.
7. Middle age: Generativity versus self-absorption or stagnation.
8. Later life: Integrity versus despair.

There are several significant insights to be gained from Erikson's work, if applied to curriculum design with developing faith as its goal. I will review each stage for application to curriculum.

1. The beginning stage of life development is a crisis of faith or trust. Trust is developed in self, others and the world, when significant others in the person's life provide the necessary love. If the love is absent a sense of mistrust develops. As teachers and advisors it is important to love, accept and care for the students. Let

them know they are wanted. Create a safe, secure and nurturing environment. When appropriate touch the students. This could range from a handshake to a pat on the back or a hug.

It is important to design a confirmation curriculum which will show God's love, acceptance and faithfulness.

2. Give assignments in and out of class that the students can achieve on their own, to aid in developing a sense of autonomy.

3. Create situations where students are allowed to choose activities. This will help develop a positive outlook and encourage initiative.

4. Identify Christian values, social interaction or tasks, develop appropriate sex-role identity, teach how to accept people who are different, teach basic Bible skills and concepts.

5. This is the stage for confirmation. Curriculum should aid in developing personal identity. Who am I? Where am I going? How do I get there? Diverse pressures from parents, peers, and society make it "difficult to gain a clear sense of identity." ² Goals to help youth integrate values will help give their life more meaning and identity. In forming their personal philosophy of life, they must make key decisions relating to religious beliefs, sexual ethics, values and so forth. Positive role models are especially important for adolescents.

During this stage of adolescence, youth will be forming beliefs and values and need to be challenged to use abstract thinking. But, the youth are not ready to make final and absolute decisions at this time. Adolescents are not ready to "install lasting idols or ideals as guardians of a final identity."³ Teachers should encourage students but not pressure them concerning life time decisions for God.

6. Intimacy involves an ability to share with others. Thus, a task could be encouraging dialogue through small groups.

Stages seven and eight which occur later in life, can be greatly influenced by grounding a faith in God's grace. Curriculum, especially Lutheran, should have the grace of God underscored. When all of life is seen as a gift it will be more difficult to move in the direction of stagnation and despair.

In the last stage of the life cycle it is significant that Erikson does not speak about trust.

For him there is nothing left to trust other than that good one leaves behind. . .

Trust, and hope which flows from it, is the dominant element of Christian faith at the end of human life, even as it was in the beginning, and helplessness is a condition that calls for trust.⁴

James Fowler is a leader in the field of faith development. He has followed a school of thought developed by Jean Piaget (cognitive development) and Lawrence Kohlberg

(moral development). Fowler suggests that faith also develops through recognizable and sequential stages.

Fowler views faith as a unity of knowing, doing and feeling.⁵ He sees faith as very relational. It is a "qualitative trust that is basic to all human behavior."⁶ He has named eight stages.⁷ The first stage (ages 3-7) is intuitive/projective faith. This is faith known primarily through intuition and imitation of parents. Stories of good and evil are popular at this stage.

The second stage (ages 7-11) is called mythic/literal. It is an affiliative faith stage where the person more consciously joins the group and understands symbols in one dimension and literally. Teachers do well to present the Gospel as trustable at this stage.

Stage three (ages 12-18) is called synthetic/conventional. Here the person's experience moves beyond the family. The person operates from a "conformist" mentality, making decisions and responses based on the expectations of significant others. "At this stage there is deep hunger for acceptance by those whom the adolescent values."⁸ A loving, accepting, personal God is very attractive.

In a cohesive society where roles are clearly defined, such as occupations, positions in the family and social classes, stage three faith formation works easily. The youth can imitate societies expectations. But, our country today is an increasingly pluralistic society. There

are numerous models, expectations and judgements to choose from. To resolve the problem of conflicting expectations and authorities adolescents will often choose one of two options. One method is to act one way with peers and another with parents. Another method is to place one authority over all the rest.

Each student is an individual and will be moving at different times through stages. The teacher should be sensitive to each student's timing and recognize and accept their need to conform to peers. At the same time, the teacher can also encourage and challenge the students to think critically for themselves.

Stage four (ages 18-20) Fowler calls the individuating/reflexive faith. In this stage the person begins to make decisions about their own identity, rather than give up this task to authorities. There is a growing ability to understand the polarities and paradoxes of life. Overall, stage four is the new courage to stand alone and choose, rather than receive.

Stage five (ages 30-40) faith is called conjunctive. Paradoxes which were handled in tension are now embraced. Life's ambiguities are accepted. The person is open to the truth in other's positions. This stage is one of real openness, to the point of risking change in one's own ideas and convictions. Formal thought has become dialectical. There is empathy for all people, not just one's own group.

Stage six (age 40 onward) is called universalizing. Very few people reach this stage. They become a transforming presence of God for others. Formal thinking goes beyond dialectics to synthesis. There is a deep sense of interrelatedness with all of reality.

John Westerhoff sees faith development without exact age boundaries, but has identified four styles in people's pilgrimage of faith.⁹ The first style is experienced faith, characterized in early childhood. This initial stage involves the formation of trust, acquisition of role models, development of the foundations for integration of belief and action, and the experience of exploring and testing which helps to form attitudes of openness or closeness.

The second style is affiliative faith, characterized in later childhood. This style includes a sense of belonging, participation, service, sense of community, religious affections, reliance on authoritative interpretation, and forming a firm set of beliefs, attitudes, and values.

At age thirteen, the beginning of adolescence, the third style is adopted called a searching faith. This style includes questioning, doubt, possible depression, criticism of one's own tradition, experimentation with alternatives, searching for understanding and truth, commitment to ideology and engagement in related action.

The last style, which usually occurs in adulthood, is called mature or owned faith. In this style a person attains a sense of centeredness and integrity of belief and action, a strong personal belief, clear sense of identity, openness to others, and a readiness to share their faith.

Developmental studies show the need for developing a sense of basic trust in God and others, competence, social acceptance, and positive self-identity in an intentionally nurturing atmosphere.

II. LEARNING THEORY

The following ten principles¹⁰ of how people learn have "special relevance to Christian initiation" ¹¹ and application for confirmation curriculum and teaching.

1. "Learning is change." Prepare for, expect and verbally recognize the student's transformation by the Holy Spirit, as the curriculum leads to conversion.

2. "Learning is painful". A caring and nurturing atmosphere is needed, as growth and change may be threatening. Openness to individuality and not pressure to conform to one interpretation is important.

3. "Persons learn what is relevant to their experience, interests, needs, and goals." God is our role model with this principle in sending Jesus Christ to meet our needs.

Confirmation youth will better "internalize" the Christian faith when the course addresses their unique needs and questions.

4. "Persons learn through experience-reflection." Involvement adds to ownership and meaning in learning. Participation in the life of the church, along with field trips and various action activities, provide opportunities for reflection and thus deepen learning.

5. "Persons learn by questioning." Life is not made up of all black and white choices covered by the catechism. To properly prepare youth for critical evaluation of life's many options, problem solving and questioning should be used in the curriculum.

6. "Persons learn by identification." Students see teachers as role models. Relationships with students are filled with opportunities to witness the Christian life.

7. "Persons learn through knowing and understanding, the conceptual process." Structured content should be well defined to actively engage the student. Facts and information are needed for youth to understand and better grasp the meaning and history of Christian faith.

8. "Persons learn through belonging." The idea that God loves and accepts you is learned and believed much faster when the student experiences belonging, acceptance and participation within the confirmation class and church.

9. "Persons learn through choosing." Choosing is an important learning experience. Confirmation youth are already making many significant decisions in life. The curriculum designed in this paper facilitates the ultimate choice, faith in Jesus Christ.

10. "Individuals have different learning styles." Learning styles are as unique as personalities. A confirmation course should include a variety of learning styles. The class itself could contribute to the planning.

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Chapter 4

APOSTLES' CREED CURRICULUM

INTRODUCTION

This confirmation curriculum is designed to be used in Lutheran Churches. The Lutheran confirmation curriculum's emphasis is on teaching doctrines and the proper theology to junior high youth. This has led to an unbalanced focus on faith as intellectual assent. Past curriculum has also assumed the youth have a Christian background and are baptized. The curriculum offered here attempts to balance faith as assent, trust and action. This curriculum can also be easily used for beginners in the faith. Another emphasis of the curriculum is to aid in the developing of a personal and trusting relationship with Jesus Christ. The Bible, class atmosphere, relationships, story and a variety of activities will be used to present the faithfulness of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in a personal manner.

The material is written for junior high school youth in grades eight and nine. The ages for this group range from twelve to fifteen. This curriculum covers one section of Luther's Small Catechism, the Apostles' Creed.

The course consists of five sessions of two hours each. Every four weeks throughout the year there will be a rotation of activities, in addition to regular class time. The four activities are recreation, short field trips, small group work (called care groups), and dinner together.

Material that is not covered completely in class may be assigned with the memory work to be done at home.

Rotating Activities

The reasons for the four rotating activities are many. Rotating activities give a sense of excitement and variety, as youth look forward to something new each week. Boredom is a constant battle in youth ministry. The activities build bonds through common experiences and lend to a sense of belonging. The activities allow youth to move around during class time and break from sitting. Junior high youth, with their high energy level appreciate the physical movement between and during activities.

Recreation is fun and aids interaction. Team competition can build unity, and is a great outlet for energy. The games are led and selected by the youth, with direction from adults. Games are to be a mixture of physical and non-physical activities, for instance, volleyball and picture charades. This helps to recognize youth with differing gifts.

Field trips serve to broaden the student's concept of ministry that is being done in the community. A repeated idea of junior high youth in my experience is that Christian activity is isolated or directed only to their own church's physical facility. To overcome this idea short trips will be made to other churches, hospitals, funeral homes, Salvation Army, police chaplain and other places outside their own church.

Small group building will take place monthly, so that youth can experience more intimately than in the larger group a sense of love, trust and acceptance as they study the Bible, share of themselves and grow in their faith. Groups consist of five or six youth of the same sex, with one or two adult leaders.

There is a sacramental mystery connected with eating a meal together. People are brought together in a very warm and unique way when gathered round the table. Parents coordinate an inexpensive and easy-to-prepare dinner once a month for the classes.

Role models play an important part in the life of adolescents. Junior high youth look up to high school youth, so invite one or two high school youth who are good role models to provide devotions and join the group for dinner. High school youth often appreciate the invitation and the opportunity to be of service to the church.

Importance of Advisors

A meeting with parents, interested adults and confirmation students can be held before confirmation classes begin to give an overview of the program. In addition, expectations of the teacher and church may be covered. This meeting also gives adults an opportunity to volunteer in the following areas: serve as quarterly advisors who lead and participate in classes and activities; help cook, serve and clean up dinner; chaperone a fellowship activity. You will probably have a much better response from advisor volunteers if they can choose a quarter of the year, rather than a full years commitment. A sheet of paper may be handed out at this meeting listing fall, winter and spring quarters. Adults may select one or more specific quarters by priority. Also, the list may contain the dates on which the dinners are served, so the adults may volunteer separately for them.

Adult advisors play an important role in this curriculum. Each advisor will attend all classes for the quarter, be assigned a group of six students, listen and record individually their weekly memory work at the beginning of class, lead them in small group building, join in trips and dinners. A training session for each quarter's new advisors should include: highlighting their importance as role models and in showing Christ's love and acceptance; teaching them how to lead a small group; explaining the

procedure of disciplining youth; building support with other advisors; communicating the goals and other expectations for the program.

The standard rule is to assign eighth grade parents to the ninth grade class, and vice versa, to help curb peer group (also parent) pressure and embarrassment. Parent participation is very important, in that it models many things for youth. A clear message is that the youth, this confirmation process and God are important enough to inspire commitment of time and effort. Most parents are eager to help, and find that the experience rekindles their own faith.

I developed and used the rotating schedule and activities for two years in the church where I directed the confirmation program. The program was well received by youth and parents. In the two years the program was used the number of youth in confirmation classes for eighth and ninth graders grew from 35 to 75. The two classes stayed separate during regular class and small group time, but joined together for recreation, dinner, field trips and special activities.

Language Changes

I have changed the exclusively male language of Luther in the Small Catechism Explanations to inclusive language. Also, I've changed the story "Footprints" to a

female point of view, to give more balance to the male point of view in other stories.

Music

Fifteen to twenty minutes before class begins have contemporary Christian music playing in the background as the teacher and advisors greet arriving students. This is an excellent way to introduce and build interest in the expanding area of contemporary Christian music. Youth favorites are: Petra, Amy Grant, Micheal W. Smith, White Heart, Keith Green and many more. It's exciting to see youth replace or add Christian musicians with a faith message to the current rock and roll idols.

Sermon Notes

In Appendix A you will find a sermon note form. This will help the students listen better; recognize the different church seasons and colors; encourage attendance at worship; identify liturgy; give opportunity to internalize the sermon by asking about personal application; provide a vehicle for asking questions; and an instrument for the pastor to evaluate communication with junior high youth. The teacher of this course should decide, with student input, the number of sermon notes required for each quarter.

THE APOSTLES' CREED

SESSION 1

GETTING ACQUAINTED

Goals: Establish foundation for developing relationships, learn names, introduce Apostles' Creed, biblically show God's faithfulness.

Before the Meeting: For name tags bring several sheets of different colored construction paper, yarn cut in 2 1/2 foot lengths to attach tags around neck, several colored thick felt pens. Review introduction to the Apostles' Creed. Pray individually for potential students, and telephone each one to express your personal interest in their becoming involved with confirmation. Also, work through the Bible study.

WELCOME, INTRODUCTION OF ADVISORS: (10 min.)

ACTIVITY: (30 min.)

Sharing of Name Tags:

This activity is to help the group start sharing and get to know each other better. All of the youth make name tags in the shape of their favorite animal by tearing the construction paper with their fingers. On the front they are to put their first and last name. On the back of the name tag they will write the answers to the following questions.

1. Your favorite color
2. Something you're good at
3. A positive word that describes you
4. Something which is important in your life at this time

When the group is finished start with the teacher and have each member share his or her tag with the group.

RECREATION: (30 min.) Human Bingo and Train Wreck
(see appendix B)

COVER CLASS YEAR SCHEDULE, EXPECTATIONS: (15 min)

BIBLE STUDY (30 min.)

We can have faith in God

In God's eyes, you are a person of great value. You are created in God's image (Gen. 1:27). Read Isaiah 43:4 and write out how God feels about you. _____

You recognize value in your life as you begin to exercise your faith. How can you develop that kind of faith? The first step is to try to understand God better, because God is the source of faith.

God's faithfulness causes God's love and mercy to continue towards you. Read Psalm 117 and Lamentations 3:22-23. What do these verses reveal about God's faithfulness toward you? _____

The two words "never fail" describe God's faithfulness.

God's faithfulness to us can inspire faith in us. How has God proven trustworthy to you? _____

What is the biblical definition of faith? (Hebrews 11:1) _____

Look up the following verses and decide which verse describes which benefit of faith in God that is listed in the second column. Draw lines to connect your answers.

Romans 15:13	Power over satan
Ephesians 3:12	Answered prayer
Matthew 21:22	Hope, joy, peace
Ephesians 6:16	Access to God

Faith is confidence in your mind, your feelings, and your actions that God will never fail. When we say that we believe what is stated in the Apostles' Creed, we are giving more than lip service. We are putting God first with our total being: mind, feelings and actions.

Read through the Creed as a class.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son,
our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified,
died,
and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

CLOSING - REVIEW: (5 min.)

SESSION 2

WHO IS GOD?

Memory Verse: Gen.1:1

Goals: Gain a deeper understanding of God as Creator, that
God is faithful in good and bad times.

Before the Meeting: Work through the Bible study.

MEMORY WORK, ROLL: (10 min.)

BIBLE STUDY: (50 min.)

God is so great the Bible uses many different ways
to describe what God is like. Look up the following Bible
passages and list the many pictures of God.

Deuteronomy 32:4, Isaiah 40:11, Psalm 3:3, Psalm
27:1, Psalm 95:3. _____

Look up Matthew 6:9. What name did Jesus teach the
disciples to call God? _____

The following are characteristics of God. In groups
of four divide up the various Bible verses to be looked up.
Next to the character each person write one of the letters:

A if you agree

D if you disagree

U if undecided about the statement for you personally
at this time.

_____ All powerful: God's rule has no borders. Jesus crosses over borders of human and divine in the incarnation. Jeremiah 32:17; Matthew 19:26.

_____ All-knowing: God knows everything. There is nothing that can happen in the world without God knowing it. God knows everything I think, say or do. Psalm 139:1-6; 13-18, Romans 11:33-36.

_____ Loving: God is absolute love, as seen in the gift of Jesus Christ to provide for my salvation. If God is love, I can do anything I like knowing I'll be forgiven. John 3:16, 15:9.

_____ Eternal: God lives forever. Life on earth is very short compared to the long future with God in heaven. Psalm 90, 1 Timothy 1:17

_____ Faithful: God is true to God's promises. If I loose my faith in God I can always count on God's faithfulness to me. Psalm 91:2-16, 1 Corinthians 10:13.

_____ Caring: God cares. There is no pain, suffering, or death beyond the reach of God. God is present in pain. Isaiah 61:1-3, Matthew 6:25-30, Revelation 21:3-4.

_____ Holy: God is pure; there is no evil in God's intentions. If God is holy, then I must be holy. Isaiah 6:1-8, John 1:5.

_____ Sovereign: God is ruler and sustainer of the universe. If God is sovereign, I don't have to worry about anything anymore. Psalm 46:10, Matthew 6:13.

What images or symbols do you have of God? _____

How would you describe God to a friend? a teacher?

How is your view of God similar or different from the Bible texts we have studied? _____

How is your view of God different from your parents view? _____

Read as a class The First Article and explanation of the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

What does this mean? by Martin Luther

I believe that God has created me and all that exists. God has given me and still preserves my body and

soul with all their powers. God provides me with food and clothing, home and family, daily work, and all I need from day to day. God also protects me in time of danger and guards me from every evil. All this God does out of fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, though I do not deserve it. Therefore I surely ought to thank and praise, serve and obey God. This is most certainly true.

For Discussion:

1. In his explanation of the First Article, Luther lists some of God's gifts. What are some others you would add?
2. There are many hungry people in the world. Does God care for the hungry? (There is enough food in the world to feed everyone but distribution is not being made to the starving by choice and non-awareness)

SMALL GROUPS: (55 min.)

To help get to know your group members better, put the following symbols on your map handout. B = where I was born. P = where my parents grew up. V = most memorable vacation. L = where I would like to live. M = the area I see like myself. Share your answers with the group.



Read the story "Footprints" together; then answer the questions and share your responses with the rest of the group.

FOOTPRINTS

One night a woman had a dream. She dreamed she was walking along the beach with the Lord. Across the sky flashed scenes from her life. Each scene, she noticed two sets of footprints in the sand; one belonging to her, and the other to the Lord.

When the last scene of her life flashed before her, she looked back at the footprints in the sand. She noticed that many times along the path of her life there was only one set of footprints. She also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in her life.

This really bothered her and she questioned the Lord about it. "Lord, you said that once I decided to follow you, you'd walk with me all the way. But I have noticed that during the most troublesome times in my life, there is only one set of footprints. I don't understand why when I needed you most you would leave me."

The Lord replied, "My precious, precious child, I love you and I would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

What feelings and thoughts do you have after reading this story? _____

Why did the woman think she was abandoned at times?

Some of my most troublesome times now are _____

Has God reassured you in troublesome times? How?

God seems most distant when _____

How can God let us know that God is with us in our lowest and highest points? _____

God created you and is more faithful to you than your best friend. God promises to love and never leave you. What difference does this make in your life? _____

What does this phrase mean: "We have faith in God because God is trustworthy"? _____

God speaks to you in Isaiah 46:3-4, so that you will not forget that it is your heavenly Father and creator who carries you from birth to death. "Hearken to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been

borne by me from your birth, carried from the womb; even to your old age I am God, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save."

Close with prayer.

CLOSING - REVIEW (5 min.)

SESSION 3

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN?

Memory Verse: Rev. 3:20

Goals: Consider questions: What is a Christian? How to become a Christian?

Before the Meeting: Work through the Bible study. Have arrangements made with hospital for a visit.

MEMORY WORK, ROLL: (10 min.)

TRIP: (50 min.) Arrange in advance with a chaplain or other person in charge of pastoral care to visit a hospital. The purpose is to inform the students of ways these people minister to patients and families.

BIBLE STUDY: (55 min.)

A Christian is a person who has a personal, daily relationship with Jesus Christ. To merely be a church member is no guarantee of a right relationship with Jesus Christ. The Christian life is lived by faith. Faith is trust. We can trust our lives to Jesus because He has proven Himself trustworthy by His life, death, resurrection and His continuing presence through the Holy Spirit. That relationship is a free gift from God.

Sin is a problem because it pulls us away from trusting God. It separates us from God. Read Jeremiah 17:9 and Mark 7:21-23. What are our hearts like according to these verses?

Read Romans 3:23 and 6:23.

Sin means to "miss the mark". It means going your own way instead of God's way. Spiritual death is the separation of people from God.

To solve the problems of sin and death and to bring us into a closer personal relationship, God out of love did something very special for us. Read Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 1 Peter 3:18. Write in your own words what God did.

What does Jesus say about Himself in the following verses?

Matthew 28:18 _____

28:20 _____

Mark 14:61-2 _____

John 6:38 _____

10:30 _____

14:8-9 _____

Look up the following verses and write why Jesus came.

John 1:17 _____
 3:16 _____
 10:10 _____
 14:6 _____

Read Philippians 2:6-11. Jesus willingly gave up the privileges of existing in like form with God the Father, and came to earth in human form to experience life as you experience it. Why do you think Jesus did this?

Jesus went through the same kinds of things you face. But He also gave up His life for you. Why? Because He loved you so much, He willingly endured the humiliation and pain of death on the cross to pay the penalty for our sin and draw us to him. As you think about what Jesus Christ did for you, what emotions do you feel?

List ways you think a person becomes a Christian.

Here are five steps taken from Scripture that are helpful in receiving or renewing Christ into your life.

1. Admit you need Jesus (Jesus means savior)

According to Romans 3:10, why do you need Jesus?

Basic human nature is rebellious and opposes God. It can cause you to say, "I don't need God."

But because of God's grace you can say, "I need God." God offers grace to you so you can admit that you need God.

GRACE is the free gift of God given to help you turn to God. Grace is God's love and mercy, which you don't deserve. Grace is a dynamic force that supplies you with the desire and power to surrender your life to God.

How does step 1 relate to you? _____

2. Be willing to turn from your sins (repent)

What does Mark 1:15 say to you about turning from your sins? _____

Repent means "to turn around," to be willing to turn away from a self-centered, self-controlled life.

How does step 2 relate to you? _____

3. Believe that Jesus died for you, and give your life to Him. From John 1:12 and 2 Corinthians 5:15, what do you need to do to give your life to Christ?

Christian means "Christ in one." Christ must live in you. He comes to take control of all of your life.

How does step 3 relate to you? _____

4. Believe that Jesus has come into your life and that He has saved you.

What does John 3:16-18 say about believing in Christ? _____

Believe means "to trust" in Jesus with your mind, emotions and actions every day.

How does step 4 relate to you? _____

5. Follow Jesus Christ as Lord in obedience.

From John 8:31 what must you continue in to be truly following Jesus as a disciple? _____

Baptism is an initial way to identify with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. What does Jesus command of His disciples in Matthew 28:19? _____

Obedience means that when you ask Jesus into you life, you allow him in as the owner, not just as a guest. (Think of the difference between an owner of a house and a guest in a house.)

How does step 5 relate to you? _____

If you haven't asked Jesus into your life, you can do so right now. This prayer will guide you:

"Lord Jesus, I admit that I am selfish and in need of your forgiveness. I confess my sins, turn from them, and ask you to come into my life. I give my life to you. I want to trust you as Savior and follow you as Lord. I ask you to guide me in all parts of my life. I want to follow and obey you in the fellowship of your Church. Amen."

If you have already asked Jesus into your life, thank Him for living in you.

Read together as a class the second article and Luther's meaning.

Second Article of Apostles's Creed

I believe in Jesus Christ,
 his only Son,
 our Lord.
 He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
 and born of the virgin Mary.
 He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified,
 died,
 and was buried.
 He descended into hell.

 On the third day he rose again.
 He ascended into heaven,
 and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 He will come again to judge the living
 and the dead.

What does this mean? by Martin Luther

I believe that Jesus Christ -- true God, Son of the Father from eternity, and true man, born of the Virgin Mary -- is my Lord.

At great cost he has saved and redeemed me, a lost and condemned person. He has freed me from sin, death, and the power of the devil -- not with silver or gold, but with his holy and precious blood and his innocent suffering and death.

All this he has done that I may be his own, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true.

Discussion:

1. In what ways do you think Jesus was the same as any other man?
2. In what ways do you think He was completely different from anyone else?
3. Jesus said: "He who has seen Me has seen the Father." (John 14:9) What did He mean?

CLOSING - REVIEW: (5 min.)

SESSION 4

IMAGES OF JESUS CHRIST

Goals: To know and experience through story that Jesus gave himself on the cross for us. Jesus wants to be Lord of our whole, life not just convenient parts.

Before the Meeting: Go through the stories and questions.

MEMORY WORK, ROLL: (10 min.)

RAGMAN STORY: (20 min.)

THE RAGMAN

(Instruct the youth that you will be telling them a story. They are to move from their desks to a carpeted area and make themselves comfortable by either sitting or lying down. They must not talk to each other because they need to listen closely. Explain that the story is called the Ragman and it is about a man in the inner city who pulls a cart and trades with people old rags for new ones. Listen to this story and see how the ragman is like Jesus Christ who took on our sins and pains on the cross and gave us forgiveness. As Martin Luther said earlier, it was at great cost, death on the cross, that Jesus saved and redeemed us. Practice reading the story several times aloud, working on a slow pace, voice inflection, and eye contact. Begin and end by reading Isaiah 53:3-6. Instruct them that this passage from the Bible describes how Jesus suffered for us.)

RAGMAN by Walter Wangerin, Jr.

I saw a strange sight. I stumbled upon a story most strange, like nothing my life, my street sense, my sly tongue had ever prepared me for.

Hush, child. Hush, now, and I will tell it to you.

Even before the dawn one Friday morning I noticed a young man, handsome and strong, walking the alleys of our City. He was pulling an old cart filled with clothes both bright and new, and he was calling in a clear, tenor voice: "Rags!" Ah, the air was foul and the first light filthy to be crossed by such sweet music.

"Rags! New rags for old! I take your tired rags! Rags!"

"Now, this is a wonder," I thought to myself, for the man stood six-feet-four, and his arms were like tree limbs, hard and muscular, and his eyes flashed intelligence. Could he find no better job than this, to be a ragman in the inner city?

I followed him. My curiosity drove me. And I wasn't disappointed.

Soon the Ragman saw a woman sitting on her back porch. She was sobbing into a handkerchief, sighing, and shedding a thousand tears. Her knees and elbows made a sad X. Her shoulders shook. Her heart was breaking.

The Ragman stopped his cart. Quietly, he walked to the woman, stepping round tin cans, dead toys, and Pampers.

"Give me your rag," he said so gently, "and I'll give you another."

He slipped the handkerchief from her eyes. She looked up, and he laid across her palm a linen cloth so clean and new that it shined. She blinked from the gift to the giver.

Then, as he began to pull his cart again, the Ragman did a strange thing: he put her stained handkerchief to his own face; and then he began to weep, to sob as grievously as she had done, his shoulders shaking. Yet she was left without a tear.

"This is a wonder," I breathed to myself, and I followed the sobbing Ragman like a child who cannot turn away from mystery.

"Rags! Rags! New rags for old!"

In a little while, when the sky showed grey behind the rooftops and I could see the shredded curtains hanging out black windows, the Ragman came upon a girl whose head was wrapped in a bandage, whose eyes were empty. Blood soaked her bandage. A single line of blood ran down her cheek.

Now the tall Ragman looked upon this child with pity, and he drew a lovely yellow bonnet from his cart.

"Give me your rag," he said, tracing his own line on her cheek, "and I'll give you mine."

The child could only gaze at him while he loosened the bandage, removed it, and tied it to his own head. The bonnet he set on hers. And I gasped at what I saw: For with the bandage went the wound! Against his brow it ran darker, more substantial blood-- his own!

"Rags! Rags! I take old rags!" cried the sobbing, bleeding, strong, intelligent Ragman.

The sun hurt both the sky, now, and my eyes; the Ragman seemed more and more to hurry.

"Are you going to work?" he asked a man who leaned against a telephone pole. The man shook his head.

The ragman pressed him: "Do you have a job?"

"Are you crazy?" sneered the other. He pulled away from the pole, revealing the right sleeve of his jacket--flat, the cuff stuffed into the pocket. He had no arm.

"So," said the Ragman. "Give me your jacket, and I'll give you mine."

Such quiet authority in his voice!

The one-armed man took off his jacket. So did the Ragman--and I trembled at what I saw: for the Ragman's arm stayed in its sleeve, and when the other put it on he had two good arms, thick as tree limbs; but the Ragman had only one.

"Go to work," he said.

After that he found a drunk, lying unconscious beneath an army blanket, an old man, hunched, wizened, and sick. He took that blanket and wrapped it round himself, but for the drunk he left new clothes.

And now I had to run to keep up with the Ragman. Though he was weeping uncontrollably, and bleeding freely at the forehead, pulling his cart with one arm, stumbling for drunkenness, falling again and again, exhausted, old, old, and sick, yet he went with terrible speed. On spider's legs he skittered through the alleys of the City, this mile and the next, until he came to its limits, and then he rushed beyond.

I wept to see the change in this man. I hurt to see his sorrow. And yet I needed to see where he was going in such haste, perhaps to know what drove him so.

The little old Ragman--he came to a landfill. He came to the garbage pits. And then I wanted to help him in what he did, but I hung back, hiding. He climbed a hill. Then he sighed. He lay down. He pillowed his head on a handkerchief and a jacket. He covered his bones with an army blanket. And he died.

Oh how I cried to witness that death! I slumped in a junked car and wailed and mourned as one who has no hope--because I had come to love the Ragman. Every other face had faded in the wonder of this man, and I cherished him; but he died. I sobbed myself to sleep.

I did not know--how could I know?--that I slept through Friday night and Saturday and its night, too.

But then, on Sunday morning, I was wakened by a violence.

Light--pure, hard, demanding light--slammed against my sour face, and I blinked, and I looked, and I saw the last and the first wonder of all. There was the Ragman, folding the blanket most carefully, a scar on his forehead, but alive! And besides that, healthy! There was no sign of sorrow nor of age, and all the rags that he had gathered shined for cleanliness.

Well, then I lowered my head and, trembling for all that I had seen, I myself walked up to the Ragman. I told him my name with shame, for I was a sorry figure next to him. Then I took off all my clothes in that place, and I said to him with dear yearning in my voice: "Dress me."

He dressed me. My Lord, he put new rags on me, and I am a wonder beside him. The Ragman, the Ragman, the Christ!

"He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed." Isaiah 53:3-5.

(Pause for a few moments before beginning with the following questions for discussion. This gives the youth more time to experience and think about the story.)

1. What feelings do you have about this story?
2. What happened to the Ragman when he exchanged the old rags for the new one?
3. Why did you or the author come to love the Ragman?
4. How was the Ragman like Jesus Christ? Different?

DINNER TOGETHER: (30 min.)

BIBLE STUDY AND STORY: (55 min.)

Make a list of the difficult areas of your life.

Some on that list are out of our control and can frustrate anyone. But many of those areas are a result of our saying or doing what we know is wrong. The Apostle Paul also had this problem. In Romans 7:15 he said, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate."

Paul, knew the problem well, but also the solution. What solution does Paul give in Colossians 1:27? _____

It is important to remember that Jesus Christ is alive in you through the Holy Spirit to give you power in the areas you need most.

The Christian life is not you doing your best for God. It is being totally available for God to do God's work in you.

Now read the following story as a class. As you read, summarize what each section or room says to you about Christ living in you.

The Den _____

The Dining Room _____

The Living Room _____

The Workshop _____

The Game Room _____

The Hall Closet _____

THE GUEST WHO TOOK OVER

What Happened When Jesus Came To Live With Me.

By Steve Lawhead

Saturday, December 6

Today I made up my mind. I'm going to invite Jesus into my life. Now, I've got a big, rambling ranch-style life with a lot of rooms. I'm sure I can make Him feel at home. I've put new curtains in the guest room and everything's ready. He'll like living with me.

Sunday, December 7

He arrived just like He said He would; He came right in -- added a little class to my life. I'm sure glad I asked Him. There may be a few little things to rearrange, but I'm sure we'll get along just fine.

Wednesday, December 10

It has come to my attention that He doesn't want to stay in His room all the time. I don't know what to do. I'd never given it much thought, really, I'd assumed He'd be comfortable there, but He said, "I didn't come here to be a guest. If I'm going to live here, I'd like to see the rest of the house." I reacted at first but, after thinking it over, I wouldn't want to stay cooped up in the guest room either.

Thursday, December 11

Last night I took Him to the DEN. It's one of my favorite rooms, so I thought for sure He'd like it. It's a cozy room not large at all, with deep leather chairs -- good for reading and thinking.

He came in with me and started looking around. He went over to the bookshelf and picked up my copy of Playboy. That made me a little nervous, to say the least. Then He went over and looked at the pictures on the wall. He cast a doubtful eye at my gun-and-knife collection, and that did it. He didn't say anything, but I felt pressure to please such an important guest. I blurted out, "You know, Jesus, I've been meaning to do a little redecorating in here. Perhaps You would like to have a say in it too?" He

replied, "I'd be delighted to help you. But I'm afraid some of these things will have to go."

"Just say the word and they're gone," I told Him. What a relief.

Tuesday, December 16

I'd been planning to have Him down for a banquet in the DINING ROOM as soon as He settled in. Last night was the night. It was fantastic! I had really outdone myself -- that's what I figured. The Lord didn't seem to enjoy it as much as I'd hoped He would. Not at first, anyway.

Before dinner, we had some appetizers. Nothing fancy, just some potato chips and onion dip, some cheeze crunchies, pretzels, and taco fluffies. We were munching away when He asked me, "What are we having for dinner?"

I told Him, "We're having pizza and french fries, a whole can of pork and beans, and for dessert -- chocolate-covered doughnuts with raspberry ice cream and marshmallow sauce. Later on we'll have some popcorn and cotton candy for a snack." I had no sooner read off the menu than I saw Him frowning. "Did I leave anything out, Jesus?" I asked Him.

"No, not a thing," He laughed. "I couldn't help noticing that everything you were planning on serving was insubstantial junk. Garbage, as food. Where's the meat? Vegetables? Bread? That's what you really need."

"B-but," I stuttered, "I like this food. I eat it all the time."

"Look," Jesus said, getting up, "show Me where the kitchen is and I'll fix you something that will put meat on your bones. You've been indulging your shallow appetites and desires too long. I think you'll find the change rewarding."

He went in and made the most delicious meal, using the meat and vegetables of God's will and the bread of the Scripture. I must admit it was satisfying. I plan to be eating better now that He is here.

Wednesday, December 17

Tonight after supper I took the Lord into the LIVING ROOM. He liked it at once -- called it the fellowship room. He said, "We'll talk and pray and really get to know each other well."

I thought it was a terrific idea at the time, so I told Him, "That suits me just fine, Lord." And we sat down and had the best talk I can remember having.

Thursday, December 25

Tonight I was heading to the first of two parties. As I came down the hall, I happened to glance through the door of the living room and saw Jesus sitting on the couch. He wasn't reading or anything, just sitting there waiting. I poked my head in the door. "Waiting for someone?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact, I was waiting for you," He said.

"Me?" I asked. I hadn't the faintest idea what he was talking about. "I'm going out to a party," I told Him. Then it hit me. Since our first time together, I had neglected our fellowship time together. He had waited for me every evening while I went my merry way. My face turned crimson with embarrassment.

"I'm dreadfully sorry," I said. "Please forgive me for keeping You waiting."

"I forgive you," He said. "now sit with Me, if only a few moments, and we'll pray before you have to leave."

Monday, December 29

Had the day off today, so I thought I'd spend a few hours puttering around the WORKSHOP. Jesus met me at the basement door, just as I was starting down. I figured that, being a carpenter by trade, He'd like to see my tools. Indeed, He was impressed with how well-stocked I was.

"I am very proud of my workshop," I told Him. "I've got the tools and materials you need to do almost anything."

"Wonderful!" Jesus said. He glanced around the basement room and, looking rather disappointed, declared, "I don't see anything you've made."

"Well, I made these." I brought out three balsawood airplanes.

"Is that all? I expected a person as well-equipped as you to have done much more than that." He said sadly.

"I like toys, so I make them," I told Him frankly. "I don't know how to make anything else. A lot of tools are useless for me, I'm afraid. I've never had the skills to use them."

His face broke into a smile. "You'll learn," He said encouragingly, "because I'll teach you. You just do what I do." I've got to say. He does know His business. I'm often amazed at how well things turn out when He is guiding me through the steps. I'm going to learn a lot, I can tell.

Wednesday, December 31

Big party tonight! We're going to bring the new year in right! All my friends will be there and we'll get it on.

Thursday, January 1

I feel terrible. Last night wasn't a good night and I didn't have any fun. What happened was this:

I was throwing this shindig in my GAME ROOM and most of the guests had arrived. Gossip was making out with Lust on the couch. Arrogance and Envy were playing Ping-Pong and yelling at each other. Drunkenness was standing on top of the TV singing "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" at the top of his lungs. Depravity, with his obscene jokes and weird sense of humor, was on the way.

Things were just getting wound up for the evening when I walked Christ. I had forgotten all about Him. I guess I knew what kind of party it would be, so I just didn't invite Him. He looked around with an expression on His face like "I've seen it all before." He came over and asked me, "You enjoy this kind of thing?"

"Well, it's okay for laughs," I said. My friends were listening and I didn't want to hurt their feelings. "Nothing serious. It's just for fun."

"Is it?" He asked.

"Is it what?" I didn't know what He was talking about.

"Is it fun?" He looked at me hard and I just couldn't lie to Him.

"Well, not really," I told Him. "I used to think so, but not anymore."

"You want to have fun? I invented fun," He told me. "I'll introduce you to some of My friends. We'll show you what fun is meant to be."

I'm ashamed at what I did next. I turned Him off. I just walked away and left Him standing there. I ignored Him and, after a while, He left. I don't know now why I did it. It just seemed as if He were asking too much. To tell the truth, at the time I was having second thoughts about the arrangement.

But my evening was ruined. I didn't enjoy myself at all. I didn't sleep well last night, either. So I got up early and patched things up with Jesus, and while I don't feel much better about it, He assures me He'll help me get over it.

Wednesday, January 6

I was on my way to meet Jesus in the living room this morning when He stopped me in the hall. There was a pained expression on His face and I could see that something was troubling Him.

"What's the matter?"

"There's something dead around here," He said. "I can smell it. A rat or something has crawled in and died in your Hall closet."

Panic set in. I knew what was in my closet and I didn't want Him to look in there. "Oh, it's probably nothing, Lord," I assured Him. "Let's go into the living room and talk."

"I want to talk about what's in your closet," He said. He was firm.

"Well, it's really nothing, uh -- just some antiques."

"Antiques?" He said the word and looked right through me, reading my thoughts.

"Yeah, just a few personal things," I said, trying to keep up the deception. "After all, it's none of Your business." That was the wrong thing to say for sure. I knew that as soon as I had said it.

He disregarded the comment completely. "You don't expect Me to live here with something dead in the closet, do you?" Then He smiled. "I think your 'antiques' are a little moldy and it's time to get rid of them. Let's clean the closet."

"Oh, Lord, I know I should throw them out, but I just can't. I haven't got the strength. Can't you handle it? I'm afraid. I hate to ask, but . . ."

"Say no more. Just give Me the key and I'll do the rest. I don't mind a bit."

He did it all. Cleaned out the hall closet and never once mentioned a word about it. Lately I've been thinking of giving Him the deed to this place -- giving it all to Him. I'm sure He could run it better than I do. What do you think He would say if I asked Him?

Discussion:

1. What does this story say about the Christian life?

Do you agree?

2. Comment on the following sentence. Allowing

Christ to live in you daily is possible but not automatic.

CLOSING - REVIEW: (5 min.)

"Ragman" is used by permission of Harper & Row Publishers from Ragman and Other Cries of Faith by Walter Wangerin.

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SESSION 5

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Memory Verse: Acts 1:8

Goals: Describe the Holy Spirit, and how the Holy Spirit empowers us.

Before The Meeting: Work through the Bible study.

MEMORY WORK, ROLL: (10 min.)

BIBLE STUDY: (35 min.)

The Holy Spirit Gives You Power To Live The Christian Life.

Read Acts 1:8. What is it that Jesus says we will receive from the Holy Spirit? _____

Read Acts 4:31. How will we speak the word of God when we receive the Holy Spirit? _____

Let's take a look at the Bible and learn who this Holy Spirit is.

The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity.

Write out what each passage tells us about the Holy Spirit?

John 3:5-6 _____

John 14:26 _____

John 16:13 _____

Acts 4:29-31 _____

Romans 8:26-27 _____

1 Corinthians 12:2-3 _____

1 Corinthians 12:13 _____

Ephesians 5:17-20 _____

The Holy Spirit is God in action. From the beginning of creation the Holy Spirit was at work.

How do the following Old Testament verses show the Holy Spirit at work?

Genesis 1:2 _____

Isaiah 61:1 _____

Joel 2:28 _____

Haggai 2:5 _____

Look up the following verses and decide which verse describes the Holy Spirit's work in the life of Jesus Christ that is listed in the second column. Draw lines to connect your answers.

Mark 1:9-11

Temptation

Acts 10:38

Conceived

Luke 4:1-2

Anointed

Matthew 1:18-23

Baptized

RECREATION: (30 min.) Waves and Picture Charades

(see appendix B)

BIBLE STUDY CONTINUED: (40 min.)

Several times Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the Counselor. What does your counselor at school do? _____

How is the Holy Spirit similar? _____

How is the Holy Spirit different? _____

The Bible is inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Fill in the blanks of the following verses.

2 Peter 1:20-21. First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of _____ is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the _____, but men moved by the _____ spoke from God.

Does Ephesians 5:18 suggest or command us to be filled with the Holy Spirit? _____

Read John 14:15-17. How does the Holy Spirit bring us to Christ? _____

The Christian life is more than difficult; it is humanly impossible. Jesus Christ alone can live it. He wants to live through you. Thus the Christian life is not the Christian trying to imitate Christ. It is Christ imparting His life to and living His life through you. The Christian life is not what you do for Christ; it is what He does for and through

you. List the fruit of the Spirit in the following verses which is produced by the Christ-controlled life.

Galations 5:16-22 _____

The Holy Spirit makes you His dwelling place. The Holy Spirit lives inside of you and helps make you more like Jesus Christ. How do the following verses tell you about the Holy Spirit working within you?

I Corinthians 3:16 _____

Galations 4:6-7 _____

Ephesians 2:22 _____

2 Corinthians 3:16 _____

List ways that you can allow the Holy Spirit to operate more in your life. _____

As a class read together the third article and Luther's explanation.

The Third Article

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

What does this mean? by Martin Luther

I believe that I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him.

But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with gifts, and sanctified and kept me in true faith.

In the same way the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it united with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church day after day the Holy Spirit fully forgives my sins and the sins of all believers. On the last day the Holy Spirit will raise me and all the dead, and give me and all believers in Christ eternal life. This is most certainly true.

Discussion:

1. How can you tell whether or not the Holy Spirit has been at work in you?
2. Can anyone work hard enough to earn faith?

CLOSING - REVIEW: (5 min.)

Martin Luther's explanations are from The Small Catechism: In Contemporary English with Lutheran Book of Worship Texts.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: SERMON NOTE FORM

IMPROVING OUR LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

Number_____

Date_____ Your Name_____

Circle Church Season: Advent Christmas Epiphany
Lent Easter Pentecost

Circle Church Color: Purple White Green Red

Circle Liturgy Used: Confession/Kyrie Canticle
Holy Communion Other_____

Scripture Readings: First Lesson_____

Second Lesson_____ Gospel_____

Children's Sermon: In one sentence give the main idea.

****THE MORNING MESSAGE****

Pastor's Name_____

During the message quickly jot down several (5-8) important phrases or ideas. Circle the number of the phrase or idea that speaks to your own personal life the most.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

The title I would give to this message is_____

Write below any comments you have about the Scripture readings, the message, or personal questions.

APPENDIX B: RECREATION ACTIVITIES

Human Bingo. This is an excellent activity to help people get acquainted and learn each other's names. Find youth in your class who admit to something on the following bingo card. Encourage the youth to move around the whole group. When someone says "yes" to something in the box, write their first and last name in the square. You cannot use your own name and you can only use another person's name twice. Give small prizes to the first three who fill their entire card.

I broke	I sang	I jogged	I know	I eaten	I
I an	I in a	I over	I all books	I raw	I
I arm	I choir	I 3 miles	I of Bible	I oysters	I
I	I moved in	I milked	I	I never	I
I play	I past	I a	I love	I used an	I
I piano	I year	I cow	I onions	I lighthouse	I
I paddled	I have	I	I have	I sleep	I
I in	I been to	I Free	I brown	I on a	I
I school	I Alaska	I	I eyes	I waterbed	I
I weigh	I walked	I split	I driven	I TP'd	I
I under	I in wrong	I my pants	I a motor-	I a	I
I 100	I restroom	I in public	I cycle	I house	I
I last name	I sing	I born out	I stayed	I can	I
I has 10	I in the	I of this	I up all	I walk on	I
I letters	I shower	I state	I night	I hands	I

Train Wreck

Place chairs in equal rows and columns facing the same direction. One person who doesn't have a chair and is standing up front says, "Everyone with _____ on." Everyone who has that color or type of clothes mentioned has to move to a new chair (train car). The speaker tries, with the others who have to move, to grab a chair before they are all filled. The one person left standing with out a chair loses and now must give the next description of clothes for people to move. Whenever the person up front says, "train wreck," everyone must change seats.

Waves

Place chairs in a tight circle. All chairs should have youth in them except two. One person is "it" and stands at the center of the circle. On a signal to begin, the person who is "it" tries to sit in one of the empty chairs before another person can slide over and occupy it. The empty chairs will move quickly around the circle, because if the person does sit in an empty chair the person on their right beomes "it" and moves to the center of the circle to start a new game.

You can alter the number of empty chairs from one to three, making it more or less difficult for the person in the middle to find an empty chair. You may also change the

direction the circle moves by saying the person sitting to the left of the person who is "it" when they sit in an empty chair becomes "it," and then must go to the center of the circle to begin a new game.

Picture Charades

Divide the class into equal teams from three to seven members each. Each team will send one member to the center of the room to secretly receive a word which they will have to draw for their team. The person drawing the picture cannot talk, only draw. The other teammates try to guess out loud the secret word. The word for example can be a shoe, a record or an ant. The first team that guesses the word correctly wins that round. The team that is correct the most rounds wins the match.

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